

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 8272

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, BR, AF, AO

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER RULES OUT BRAZILIAN ROLE IN SOUTH
ATLANTIC ALLIANCE

REF: BRASILIA 4882 NOTAL

1. ASKED SEPTEMBER 21 ABOUT RECURRENT SPECULATION, WHICH PRESS
CLAIMS ORIGINATES IN EUROPE, THAT BRAZIL WOULD JOIN WITH
ARGENTINA, URUGUAY, CHILE AND SOUTH AFRICA IN SOUTH ATLANTIC
TREATY ORGANIZATION, FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA QUOTED AS
STATING: "THERE IS NOT THE LEAST POSSIBILITY OF A COLLECTIVE
DEFENSE SYSTEM IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC, EVEN LESS SO WITH THE
UNCOMFORTABLE AND UNDESIRABLE PRESENCE OF SOUTH AFRICA."

2. SILVEIRA, WHO ONLY SHORTLY BEFORE HAD RETURNED FROM TOKYO
WHERE HE ACCOMPANIED PRESIDENT GEISEL ON STATE VISIT, WENT ON TO
SAY THAT BRAZIL "WOULD NOT ENTER A COLLECTIVE DEFENSE
SYSTEM THAT WOULD INCLUDE THE DEFENSE OF A SEGREGATIONIST
REGIME THAT VIOLATES HUMAN DIGNITY." HE RECALLED THAT
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MAJOR WESTERN NATIONS HAVE REPUDIATED APARTHEID AND

WHITE MINORITY REGIMES AND BRAZIL IS COMMITTED TO SUPPORT THE FORMATION OF BLACK MAJORITY GOVERNMENTS. HE NOTED THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER HIMSELF HAD DECLARED HIS OPPOSITION TO SOUTH AFRICA'S FORM OF GOVERNMENT AS CONTRARY TO HUMAN DIGNITY. HE CONCLUDED BY REITERATING THAT NO ASSOCIATION COULD BE MADE FOR THE DEFENSE OF APARTHEID AS THIS WOULD "RUN AGAINST BRAZILIAN TRADITIONS IN THEIR MOST ELEMENTARY CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES."

3. EDITORIAL COMMENT HAS TAKEN SILVEIRA TO TASK FOR CON-DEMNING OUT-OF-HAND IDEA OF SOUTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. JORNAL DO BRASIL NOTED THAT HIS CONDEMNATION OF APARTHEID WAS PROPER BUT THAT THE REGIME ONLY HOURS AWAY BY AIR IN ANGOLA BACKED BY SOVIETS, CUBANS WAS EQUALLY REPUGNANT. JORNAL CALLED SILVEIRA RESPONSE NOT WHAT HE LIKED TO TERM "RESPONSIBLE PRAGMATISM" BUT HIS VERSION OF REAL POLITIK. ESTADO WAS EQUALLY TART, TAKING MINISTER TO TASK FOR MIXING UP "ETHICS AND EFFICACY" ON SOUTH ATLANTIC DEFENSE. ESTADO QUESTIONED WHETHER IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT FOR FONMIN TO PLEASE NETO AND NUJOMA AND THEIR SOVIET/CUBAN TUTORS THAN TO ATTEND TO THE TERRITORIAL AND CULTURAL INTEGRITY OF HIS OWN COUNTRY.

4. COMMENT: ESSENTIAL POINT OF SILVEIRA'S STATEMENT IS STATED AT THE OUTSET, THAT IS, IRRESPECTIVE OF SOUTH AFRICAN QUESTION, THERE IS LITTLE POSSIBILITY FOR A COLLECTIVE DEFENSE PACT INVOLVING BRAZIL. THE IDEA OF A SOUTH ATLANTIC NATO HAS SURFACED REGULARLY IN RECENT YEARS AS A CONCEPT AMONG NAVAL AND STRATEGIC PLANNERS IN BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA, BUT IT HAS NEVER ADVANCED BEYOND THE MOST TENUOUS THEORETICAL STAGE, DESPITE ITS SUPPORT IN SOME BRAZILIAN NAVY CIRCLES. EVEN SO, SILVEIRA'S SUMMARY REJECTION OF THE IDEA WILL NOT ENHANCE HIS STANDING IN SOME MILITARY CIRCLES, WHICH SINCE BRAZIL'S EARLY RECOGNITION OF THE MPLA IN ANGOLA HAVE TENDED TO REGARD THE FOREIGN MINISTER AS INDIFFERENT TO THE COMMUNIST THREAT IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC.

5. BESIDES REFLECTING BRAZIL'S OVERALL DESIRE TO FOSTER AND PRESERVE BRAZIL'S GROWING PRESENCE IN BLACK AFRICA,
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SILVEIRA'S VEHEMENT REJECTION OF COLLABORATION WITH PRETORIA REFLECTS ITAMARATY'S TACTICAL CONCERN, BASED ON RECENT EXPERIENCE (REFTEL) BUT APPARENTLY NOT SHARED BY PRESS, THAT OPPONENTS OF CLOSE RELATIONS WITH BRAZIL WITHIN AGOSTINHO NETO REGIME, AIDED BY CUBANS AND SOVIETS, MAY TRY TO USE SUCH RUMORS TO UNDERCUT BRAZUL'S STILL SHAKY DIPLOMATIC POSITION IN ANGOLA. END COMMENT.
CRIMMINS

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